

# May 2011 The Orchid Grower

Orchid Growers' Guild of Madison  
Website [orchidguild.org](http://orchidguild.org)



## NEXT MEETING May 15th

TBA: The scheduled speaker had to cancel and the search for a replacement is in progress. May is the time of year when new OGG officers are elected.

## Chuck's Repotting Demonstration:

Chuck's orchid repotting demonstration at the March 20 meeting covered repotting Phalaenopsis in tropical sphagnum moss, and in bark, plus repotting in bark Cattleya and Cymbidium genera and dividing Cattleyas and Cymbidiums.

Chuck stated that these are the methods that he uses and if they are different from your successful methods, you should stick with what works for you. There is more than one way to repot!

### Meeting Dates

May 15-Olbrich  
June Picnic-TBA  
Summer Field Trip-June 5

**Meetings start at 1:30 pm unless otherwise noted**

### Up-Coming Events:

- September 17 – 18, 2011, Wisconsin Orchid Society Show
- September 23-25, 2011, Chicagoland Orchid Festival
- October 8-9, 2011, Illinois Orchid Society Fall Mini-Show

### Officers and Committees

#### President:

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Look for a synopsis of Nile Dusdieker's presentation on Bulldog Orchids in the June Newsletter.

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### Equipment you need for repotting:

- clay and plastic pots of various sizes
- flamer
- shovel with metal tamper on end
- fresh newspaper
- sharp knife
- clippers
- hammer
- sturdy screwdriver/pry tool

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**AOS:** Jill Hynum  
**MAOC:** Wayne King, Judith Rapacz  
**Orchid Digest:** Jill Hynum

## JUNE FIELD TRIP, June 5th “Native Orchid Hunt” in Door County

It may be spring but we are still looking forward to some warmer weather. That will brighten our moods and usher in the blooming of native terrestrial orchids in Wisconsin. Last year because of an early spring, the orchids came and went before we had an organized field trip. This year we will tour Door County on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

Door County is home to some stunning and unique landscapes that are preserved in county and state parks. Some of us have made reservations at Peninsula State Park. Others may wish to make reservations at a near by hotel. (Blacksmith Inn is located in Bailey’s Harbor).

It is hard to predict flowering dates, but Door County is boreal forest because of the cooling effects of Lake Michigan. According to the **Wisconsin Trails Magazine**, at Ellison Bluff County Park there is a 100-foot bluff that parallels the Lake Michigan shoreline. Here we will find a sweep of delicate yellow lady’s slipper orchids. Ellison Bluff Park is on Porcupine Road, off Highway 42 south of Ellison Bay. After exploring, we will proceed to the Ridges Sanctuary (<http://RidgesSanctuary.org>), a nature preserve at 8270 WI Hwy 57, just north of Bailey’s Harbor.

The Ridges Sanctuary is a 1,600 acre pristine natural area. Formed in 1937, it’s the oldest private nature preserve in the state. The Ridges is designated as a State Natural Area, a National Natural Landmark, an Audubon Important Birding Area, and a Wisconsin Wetland Gem. We will look around for signs of orchid life there but we can not predict what we will find. However, know that we will be rewarded with some of Wisconsin’s native wonders. Please join us at this orchid outing. We will probably see something on June 5th but Scott Weber cautions that peak bloom is weather dependent and could vary by several days. Scott and Muffy of Bluestem Farms hope to join us.

Bring your binoculars as we may also see some interesting bird and wildlife.

Roy Lukes a naturalist from 1964 until his retirement published a book in 1988 entitled, *The Ridges Sanctuary, Its History, Geology, Plants, and Animals*. This book is available in the gift shop.

### SPRING ORCHID SALE

OGG had our usual gorgeous orchids to sell this year from Orchids Garden Centre & Nursery. Luckily for us, they were on consignment as the turnout for orchids and pansies this year was low. Our profit was \$878.40, not bad for 4 hours but not the \$1,500 we had hoped. We did talk to a few people who may come to future OGG meetings.

Future pansy/orchid sales will not be tied to Easter. Instead Olbrich wants them the first Saturday in April. That means April 7, 2012.

— Submitted by Audrey Lucier



# Heidi's Orchid Report

## A Vacation for (or from) Your Orchids

Planning a vacation is rarely hassle-free, but preparing to leave your orchids does not have to be a source of stress. Here are a few strategies and tips to ensure your orchids enjoy your vacation as much as you do! These are all things I do, or have done (and have seen benefit from), in the past. Obviously, these adjustments will only keep more needy plants (such as Vandas) satisfied for three to four days. But for short trips (holidays or long weekends), both plants and owners can rest easy.

My biggest concern is that my unattended orchids will become too dry, so these approaches are meant to slow down the evaporative process.

### 1. Humidifier

Fill your humidifier completely before leaving town. Although this is not the least expensive option (if you do not already own a humidifier), it is simple and fool-proof. Remember to add Bacteriostat or Physan to prevent your home from becoming a mold sanctuary, instead of an orchid sanctuary while you're gone. With higher humidity, your plants will not dry out as quickly in between waterings.

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## ILLINOIS ORCHID SOCIETY SPRING SHOW 2011 RIBBON JUDGING

**Set-up/take down:** Judy Stevenson, Lorraine Snyder, Denise Baylis

**Exhibit:** Second Place

### First Place

Don Fago

*Maxillaria tenuifolia*, **Best of Class**

Sandy Delamater

Brassolaelia Yellow Bird (Bl Richard Mueller x B nodosa)

Sue Reed

*Leptotes bicolor*

### Second Place

Orchids Garden Centre

Paphiopedilum Addicted Phillip (philippinense x adductum)

**pulled for AOS Judging**

Sandy Delamater

Cattleya 'Chicago Today' (Carl Hausermann x Elizabeth Carlson)

Audrey Lucier

*Sedirea japonica*

Lynn West

Blc. Ports of Paradise 'Emerald Isle' (Blc Fortune x B digbyana)

Meg McLaughlin

Phrag Paul Eugene Conroy (longifolium 'Waunakee' x wallisi)

Judy Stevenson

Caulaelia Snowflake 'Northland' (*Caularthron bicornutum* x

*Laelia albida*)

### Third Place

Don Fago

*Maxillaria tenuifolia*

Jeff Baylis

Cymbidium hybrid 'Alexandria'

Judy Stevenson

Dendrobium (Phalaenopsis Type)

Orchids Garden Centre

P. Pinlong White

Orchids Garden Centre

*Phragmipedium* Acker's Royalty (Twilight x fischeri)

Sandy Delamater

Cymbidium Devon Gala 'New Horizon' (Emma's Gala x devonianum)

(Continued from page 3)

## 2. Humidity Trays and Saucers

If you own humidity trays and saucers, remember to fill them before vacation. If you do not own humidity trays or saucers, (in the conventional sense), you can make your own! Clean dishes, bowls, pots, or pieces of terra cotta that do not have a use anymore make fine humidity trays.

## 3. Additives (Moss & Coconut)

Both moss & coconut work well for retaining moisture, and I use both. I use New Zealand sphagnum moss as a top dressing for any of my moisture-loving plants. Often times, the moss goes to seed, and provides an extra layer of protection for my plants as well. In regard to the coconut, before leaving town I cut or tear apart coconut caps and coconut pots, and then water my collection in entirety. Since water beads often cling to the coconut, my plants absorb water at a slower rate, and as a result, the humidity stays higher for a longer period of time. Although this approach is more time consuming than filling a humidifier, it is certainly cost-effective, and I have had more than my share of fun decorating my plants with coconut!

## 4. Preventing pests (Sluggo)

At one point, I had a small snail population in my orchid collection, and started using Sluggo (snail bait which contains small amounts of orchid fertilizer). Sluggo comes in small pellets and is added as a top dressing. The pellets start to break down and form a barrier over the top of the potting mix (after 1-2 weeks, depending on amount used and how moist the plant is). My plants with this Sluggo covering dry out less quickly. Another benefit, I've observed (with my *Cochleanthes amazonica* and *Encyclia cochleata*) is an increase in both plant size and flower number from the weak fertilizer in Sluggo. If you are worried about your plants becoming too dry while on vacation, I would suggest adding the recommended amount of Sluggo two weeks before vacation, and by the time you leave, the Sluggo will take care of the snails, and keep moisture levels higher.

These tips will be much more effective if you also remember to water before leaving town as well.

Happy Growing!

Heidi has set up a website to eventually sell her Mexipedium plants. Currently she has posted the articles she has written for the OGG Newsletter. Here is the link : [www.dorkids.com](http://www.dorkids.com)

## **BUDDING ARTIST?**

Orchid Quest is just a memory and perhaps you remember the beautiful porcelain vase that won Best of Show? Its artistry might have piqued your interest in trying your own hand at porcelain painting. If so, you are in luck. Our own OGG artist, Annette Minter and the artist, Randy Wollet, who is one of the best porcelain painters in the Midwest, are looking for six students for private three hour porcelain painting lessons, Tuesday evenings, 6 – 9 P.M. No art experience is necessary. Students will learn techniques and gain the level of skill necessary to complete a successful project. Classes will be held in Annette's studio. Annette is also a winner! One of her pieces was chosen as Wisconsin's best at a six-state convention held in Dubuque last fall. It is now on display for two years in Oklahoma City at the World Museum. If you are interested, contact Annette .



## APRIL OGG RIBBON JUDGING

### First Place

Terri Jozwiak	<i>Phaius tankervilliae</i>
Nile Dusdieker*	<i>Oncidium sphacelatum</i>
Steven Thimling	<i>Ascocentrum miniatum</i>
Sandy Delamater	Psychopsis (Butterfly)
Steven Thimling	<i>Renanthera monachica</i>
Sue Reed	<i>Lycaste macrobulbon</i>
Jeff Baylis	<i>Phalaenopsis stuartiana</i>
Sandy Delamater	<i>Paphiopedilum St. Swithin</i> (rothschildianum x philippinense)
Nile Dusdieker*	<i>Paphiopedilum Berenice</i> (lowii x philippinense)
Terri Jozwiak	<i>Paphiopedilum</i> (Makuli-Curtisii) – Mandiae x <i>Paphiopedilum mandiae</i>
'Napa Valley' x sib	
Jeff Baylis	Cymbidium 'Alexandria'
Sandy Delamater	<i>Miltoniopsis roezlii</i>
Terri Jozwiak	<i>Maxillaria tenuifolia</i>

### Second Place

Terri Jozwiak	Dendrobium Impact 'Red'
Steven Thimling	<i>Trichoglottis pusilla</i>
Steven Thimling	Vandofinetia Blaupunkt
Irene Mackie	Slc Circle of Life 'Red Halo' x Pot. Ryo Iwata 'Leucadia'
Terri Jozwiak	Phalaenopsis hybrid
Irene Mackie	Cymbidium
Gary Brendemuehl	<i>Paphiopedilum Matrix</i> (Conco-bellatulum 'Pert' x S. Gratrix 'Lemon Zest')
Sandy Delamater	Miltoniopsis Andrea West
Nile Dusdieker*	Phalaenopsis Liodoro

### Third Place

Steven Thimling	Dendrobium Yukidaruma 'King'
Sue Reed	<i>Paphiopedilum Grey's</i> 'Sandstone' x Mystic Isle 'Hsinying'

\* Guest Speaker



*Lycaste macrobulbon*  
shown by Sue Reed



*Ascocentrum miniatum* shown by Steven  
Thimling

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Some general requirements across all of Chuck's repotting were to have either fresh tools or metal tools so that they can be heat sterilized. Flame sterilization is the best with the hottest flame. Chuck used a propane torch with an automatic lighting attachment, but the butane mini torches used for crème brulee or your gas stove flame would work as well. Flame the tampers and the cutters right after repotting the plant so you are ready for the next plant with cool tools.

Always thoroughly water the plant to be potted the day before as that aids in its removal from the pot without excess root damage. Old mix is dumped and old orchid roots are discarded onto newspaper that is rolled up after each plant and discarded. A pile of newspapers is handy to just remove the top layer to be ready for the next orchid.

*(Always take out the label and put in a safe spot. Write the repotting date in pencil on the back of the label for reference information as to when the last repotting had been done.)*

The second consistent requirement in Chuck's repotting was to use a solution of 2 teaspoons of Physan 20 per gallon of water to wet the bark or moss mix. The bark mix should be wetted and thoroughly mixed the night before to ensure that the components of peat, perlite and bark are all completely bonded and there is no separation. The New Zealand moss, if really dry, needs a few minutes to soak up the water. The moss expands upon moistening, so allow a large enough container for this process.

Try to wet the amount of mix needed for the repotting session. Any extra mix not used within a few days should be allowed to dry for storage to prevent fungus growth that breaks down the mix and can cause disease issues with the orchids. Any wet and dried mix should be stored in a covered container to prevent more mold spores from contaminating the mix.

After repotting in bark, withhold watering for at least a week and longer (until dry) for moss. If the orchid has roots sticking to the sides of the pot, soak the pot to more easily loosen the roots from the side of the pot to avoiding tearing the roots from the sides of the pot. By holding the pot upside down and knocking on the bottom of the pot, gravity helps loosen the plant from the pot.

Depending upon the amount of roots, the next larger pot size might be the largest pot size needed for the repotting. DO NOT over pot, meaning only allow for about one to two years growth in the new pot. Knock off the loose mix and trim off any dead roots. Do not thoroughly clean off old



Chuck removed most of the media from around the roots and found a pot just large enough for the roots to fit. This particular plant had healthy roots so that it was unnecessary to trim them.



Holding the freshly potted phal aloft, Chuck demonstrated that it was firmly in place.

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mix because the mix contains some beneficial bacteria and fungus that helps the orchid adjust to the new mix.

### **Phalaenopsis repotting:**

Since Phals grow straight up in a monopodial manner center the plant in the pot. For bark repotting, add bark in layers, shake the pot to settle the mix while gradually adding more mix. Using the tamper at the outside edge of the pot to follow down the sloped sides of the pot to tamp down the mix firmly. Don't tamp close to the plant to avoid damaging the orchid roots. Go around the inside perimeter of the pot to use the narrowing of the pot to aid in the compression of the mix. When finished you should be able to hold the plant and pot up by just holding the plant, if there has been adequate compression of the bark. Chuck doesn't put plastic peanuts or bark into the pot before putting the orchid into the pot. This results in enough room in the pot with bark so that the roots will be adequately covered with mix below the pot rim.



This phal had been in moss. Be sure to leave some of the moss for beneficial fungi. Chuck is wrapping the roots with fresh moss. Phals with spikes can be repotted as long as there are no buds.

Moss replanting is slightly different. It is important when moving Phals from bark to moss that some of the old bark is left on the roots to aid in the adjustment to the new mix. The new mix needs to be inoculated with the familiar symbiotic bacteria and fungi that were in the former mix. This is very important when changing types of growing media in either direction. But with old moss potted orchids there might be old pots or plugs buried in the mix. These should be removed if possible and loosened. Remove all rotten and dead roots.

Moss repotting should not be done in a pot larger than 6 inches. For orchids requiring larger than 6 inch pots, bark should be used. Remember don't over pot and that 1 to 2 years growth is the maximum to allow for pot size.

Hold moss by clumping loosely around the roots and the old mix. (See photo previous page). Keep adding layers of moss around the root ball. Squeeze the root ball and moss into the empty pot, which should offer some resistance. The moss should not be tightly compacted but firm. Make sure that there is at least one inch of headroom between the top of the moss and the rim of the pot.

Do not water until dry and no fertilizing for about a month. Orchids grown in moss don't require as much fertilizing or watering as orchids grown in bark. When watering moss, fill the top of the pot with water. Check after this drains to make sure the moss is thoroughly wet. If not water again to the top. Do this until the moss is wet. Don't water as if the mix is bark, by having the water run through the mix at each watering. Water moss potted plants only when the moss is dry and not just surface dry, but dry past finger depth.

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### **Cattleya bark repotting:**

Cattleyas should be thoroughly watered the day before to aid in the plant removal for the pot. Cattleya roots often attach tightly to the pot sides. Softening the roots will minimize the root damage when removing the cattleya from the pot. You might need to use a screwdriver to pry the orchid out.

Cattleyas' growth is sympodial, which is a running rhizome type of growth. Since the back pseudobulbs will not produce more growth or flowers they need to be cut off and discarded allowing at least 3 to 5 newer pseudobulbs to remain. Cut off the old growth at the same angle as the sides of the pot so that the cut edge of the plant will fit back against the pot allowing for 2 years of forward growth of the orchid. Start by holding the cut edge of the orchid to the pot and below the pot rim so that the new growth will be covered by at least 1/4 inch of mix and about an inch below the rim of the pot.

Firm in the wet bark mix gradually as with the Phals in bark. Gradually adding mix and tamping from the outside edge (perimeter) of the pot down the sloping pot sides. Be very careful of the new growth and new growth eyes. There are usually at the most 2 growth eyes on the cattleya and if both are broken there will be no new growth. Do not break off any of the new growth.

### **Cymbidium bark repotting:**

Cymbidiums have sympodial growth habit that can have multiple leads. Therefore you probably will need to cut off old pseudobulbs and divide the plant. You can cut the roots then look for a natural division between the pseudobulbs. Again keep 3 to 5 good growths with leaves, discarding old back leafless bulbs. As with cattleyas, place the cymbidium pseudobulbs with the back bulbs back against the back edge of the pot to allow for new growth of 2 years forward. Hold the cymbidium about 1 inch below the top rim of the pot, gradually adding bark, shaking the mix down and tamping down the outside perimeter of the pot. The plant should be firmly sitting in the pot.

Chuck didn't have Phragmipediums or Paphiopedilums to repot but gave some pointers.



1. This cattleya needs to be repotted. Notice the new growth.



2. Pry the plant out of the pot by inserting the pry tool under the rhizome.



3. Cut the plant between the backbulbs and the new growth at the same angle as the side of the pot so that the cut edge will fit against the pot.

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4. Discard the back pseudobulbs.



5. Removing more of the old roots.



6. Fit against the side of the pot so that the new growth faces away from the side of the pot.

9. Note that the repotted cattleya sits one inch below the rim of the pot. The new growth is covered by a thin layer of media.



7. Add bark in layers, shaking the pot to settle the mix while gradually adding more mix.



8. Using the tamper at the outside edge of the pot to follow down the sloped slides, tamp down the mix firmly. Don't tamp close to the plant to avoid damaging the orchid roots. Go around the inside perimeter of the pot to use the narrowing of the pot to aid in the compression of the mix.



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Do not use peat in the paphiopedilum mix (too acidic), just bark, perlite and charcoal. Repot yearly with the new growth 1/4 inch below the mix. Do not cut the roots unless the roots are dead. There is no reason to trim roots unless they are dead or diseased. Some people add some oyster shells depending upon the type of paph.

Phragmipediums are similar to paphs in mix requirements except for phrags in 5 inches or larger pots, larger bark mix should be used. Plants in a smaller than 5 inch pot can use the paph mix.

Phrags with besseae in the background have a tendency to climb out of the pot so sending them around the inside of the pot might be the only way to keep the new growth inside the pot.

Key points to remember when repotting:

- always sterilize tools before each plant
- Physan 20 moistened mix,
- hold off watering and fertilizing for at least a week after repotting
- do not over pot
- lightly cover new growth with mix
- set the plant below the pot rim.

Springtime is the perfect time for repotting if the orchid is in an active growth cycle. Only repot when the plant is putting out new growth, new leaves or new roots.

Good potting!



Photograph by Denise Baylis  
Cymbidiums are super sturdy plants and like to be snug in a pot. Watch where new growth is, leave some of the old rhizomes for nutrients if they are not desiccated.

Thanks to Chuck Acker, Sue Reed, Denise Baylis

## Up-Coming Events

- **May 20-22** — Shreveport Orchid Society Show & AOS Members Meeting, Shreveport Convention Center, LA
- **May 13-15** — Redland International Orchid Festival, Redland Fruit & Spice Park, Homestead, FL
- **May 20-22** — Memphis Orchid Society Show: "A Celebration of Orchids" and MAOC Spring Meeting, Holiday Inn Select, I-240 & Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN
- **June 31** — Central Iowa Orchid Society Speakers' Day, Camp Dodge Recreation Center, 7105 NW 70 Ave., Johnston, IA
- **September 17-18** — Wisconsin Orchid Society Show, Mitchell Park Domes, 524 S. Layton Blvd., Milwaukee, WI
- **September 23-25** — Chicagoland Orchid Festival, Oakhill Gardens, 37W550 Binnie Road, Dundee, IL
- **October 8-9** — Illinois Orchid Society Fall Mini-Show, Glencoe, IL
- **November 14-23** — 20th World Orchid Conference, Singapore
- **September, 11-16, 2012** \*Australian Orchid Conference 2012, Kings Park, Perth, Western Australia.  
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